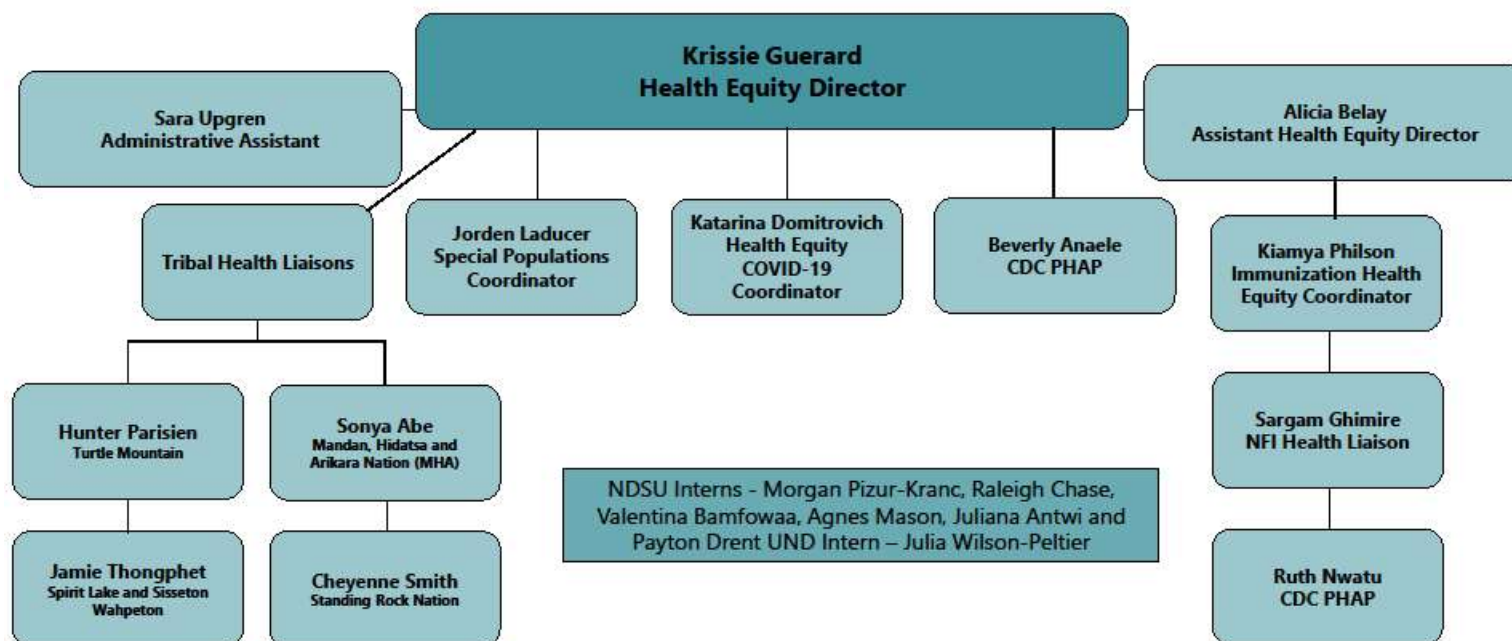


Health Equity Office



Mission

Health equity gives everyone the same opportunity to the highest level of health care that meets their needs. The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) Health Equity Office (HEO) works to understand and reduce health disparities among all North Dakotans. The primary goal is to reduce rates of disease by providing opportunities for interventions and improving access to health care. This will ensure that all North Dakotans receive the highest quality of health.

<https://www.health.nd.gov/health-equity>

Staff

Krissie Guerard – Health Equity Director

The primary purpose of this position is to lead efforts to ensure that health equity is addressed in all policies, programs, and funding decisions at NDDoH, while directing the HEO. Ms. Guerard is responsible for the oversight and management of the HEO. The position focuses on building knowledge of and action to address the root cause of health inequities and develop and implement systemic measurement for evaluation. Ms. Guerard has a focus on the youth community in the state and advises the NDDoH Youth Advisory Board.

Sara Upgren – Administrative Assistant III

The primary purpose of this position is to provide administrative support to the HEO. Ms. Upgren assists in contract management, travel plans and reimbursement, creating, formatting and editing documents. This position also assists with coordinating various activities, meetings, conferences and workshops, and is responsible for coordinating calendars, scheduling meetings, and acting as a liaison between management and employees.

Alicia Belay – Assistant Health Equity Director

This position works to provide guidance to the HIV.STD.TB and Viral Hepatitis program, surrounding how to incorporate health equity measures into program objectives. Ms. Belay coordinates focus groups and other needs assessment activities to gather information for consideration by the HIV.STD.TB and Viral Hepatitis program.

This position assists in the state Title V/Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant activities. This portion of Ms. Belay's position focuses on MCH priority projects as needed and directed by the Title V/MCH Director. Ms. Belay leads the well-woman initiative to improve preventative health for women 18-44 and will work closely with the North and South Dakota Perinatal Quality Collaborative (NSDPQC) to improve maternal outcomes.

Ms. Belay is responsible for the oversight and management of the New American, Foreign Born, Immigrant (NFI) Health Liaison, Health Equity Immunization Coordinator, and interns through the master's in public health program at North Dakota State University, including human resource/staff management and oversight. Ms. Belay focuses on the NFI community in the state and co-advises the NFI Advisory Board, and serves as the Assistant Director of Health Equity.

Katarina Domitrovich – Health Equity COVID-19 Coordinator

The primary purpose of this position is to work within the HEO in the management of COVID-19 related activities, contract management, the COVID-19 strategic plan and grant reporting. Ms. Domitrovich also assists with other health equity-related activities as needed.

Jorden Laducer – Special Populations Coordinator

The primary purpose of this position is to lead outreach to underserved populations in North Dakota to better understand the community's needs, facilitate information sharing and improve health outcomes. Mr. Laducer works to strategize with stakeholders to develop and implement methods to better serve underserved populations in North Dakota. He serves as the co-chair for the (Lesbian/Gay/Bi-sexual/Transgender/Queer/Two-Spirit) LGBTQ2S+ BeYOU Advisory Board.

Tribal Health Liaisons –

Sonya Abe – Primary Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation (MHA), Secondary Standing Rock Nation (Western North Dakota)

Cheyenne Smith – Primary Standing Rock Nation, Secondary MHA (Western North Dakota)

Hunter Parisien – Primary Turtle Mountain, Secondary Spirit Lake and Sisseton Wahpeton (Eastern North Dakota)

Jamie Thongphet – Primary Spirit Lake and Sisseton Wahpeton, Secondary Turtle Mountain (Eastern North Dakota)

The primary purpose of these positions is to act as liaisons to the NDDoH on tribal health needs and concerns. The positions assist the NDDoH's HEO and the Division of Disease Control in addressing vaccine hesitancy and conducting education and awareness for the five federally recognized tribes in North Dakota and surrounding urban areas. These positions assist with conducting disease investigations and interventions for reportable conditions and provide education and awareness for infectious and chronic diseases as needed and/or requested to the North Dakota tribal communities.

The Tribal Health Liaisons work with a team approach. They have primary responsibility for one of the Tribal Nations in North Dakota and secondary responsibilities/serve as backup for another Tribal Nation. They work in pairs of two to divide urban area tribal responsibilities into the Eastern and Western sides of North Dakota.

Sargam Ghimire – NFI Health Liaison

The primary purpose of this position is to assist the NDDoH HEO and the Division of Disease Control in addressing vaccine hesitancy and conducting education and awareness for COVID-19 and other immunizations in the NFI population. Ms. Ghimire helps the HEO identify and work through the barriers that prevent the NFI population from receiving the services provided to them. She assists with conducting disease investigations and interventions for reportable conditions and provides education and awareness for infectious and chronic diseases as needed and/or requested in the NFI population.

Kiamya Philson – Health Equity Immunization Coordinator

The primary purpose of this position is to work within the HEO in collaboration with the Immunization Division to improve vaccination rates among North Dakota's special populations, including but not limited to: NFI, Black/African American, American Indian, LGBTQ2S+, Persons that Inject Drugs, Homeless, Elderly, Persons with Disabilities, etc.

Beverly Anaele and Ruth Nwatu – CDC Public Health Associates (PHAP)

The PHAP is a competitive, two-year, paid training program with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. PHAP associates are assigned to public health agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the United States and US territories and work alongside other professionals across various public health settings. Throughout the two-year training program, associates gain hands-on experience that will serve as a foundation for their public health careers. After completing the program, PHAP graduates are qualified to apply for jobs with public health agencies and organizations.

The PHAP program is a competitive application process that states apply for.

The PHAPs in the HEO are responsible for assisting the office in all aspects of the job descriptions listed above.

HEO Interns - NDSU Interns - Morgan Pizur-Kranc, Raleigh Chase, Valentina Bamfowaa, Agnes Mason, Juliana Antwi and Payton Drent; UND Intern – Julia Wilson-Peltier

Interns within the HEO assist with all programmatic needs that staff identify. The internships are geared towards public health students to gain real-world public health experience.